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LABOUR ORGANISER

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EYE C.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms are obtainable from **The Secretary, Eye Constituency Labour Party, c/o 33 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich**, to whom they must be returned not later than 28th February, 1955.

QUOTE L99777

THE Labour Party now has a Co-operative Society Trading Number. By occasionally quoting L99777 when purchasing at Co-ops in the national membership scheme, individual members and affiliated organisations can help the Party's national funds.



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1930 - 1955



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THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

Why They Voted

THE behaviour of the British elector is becoming more and more a subject for scientific study. Apart from general surveys, such as those made at the 1950 and 1951 General Elections, there have been published studies of the results of careful research work done in particular constituencies.

The most recent to be published is about the electors of Bristol North East in the 1951 General Election.* In this constituency over 800 of the electors were interviewed personally, and of these almost half were interviewed twice, once before the election and once after the election.

As one of the study's two authors is a statistician, it is understandable that great care was taken in selecting those to be interviewed; the samples used are as near a true reflection of the whole electorate as any sample can be.

No Surprises

The study contains no startling discoveries and in the main merely confirms what we all know—e.g., the Labour Party draws its main support from the working class and the Conservative Party from the middle class!

It was not surprising either to discover that out of 91 trade unionists, 66 voted Labour; and that out of 97 non-unionists

only 36 voted Labour. What is rather surprising is that 25 out of the 91 trade unionists voted Tory.

The Bristol Co-operative Society is one of the most progressive in the country and is closely associated with the Labour Party in the city. Yet, out of 177 members of the Society, 66 voted Tory and 111 Labour.

There are still a lot of working-class people to be won over from the Tories, and Labour Parties, especially in marginal constituencies like Bristol North East, should be directing their main efforts to this job of conversion.

Analysis

The samples taken would seem to indicate that the older people are, the more Conservative they are, but an analysis shows that there is really no separate 'age effect': the apparent tendency is because middle-class people live longer than working-class people.

The Conservatives did win new support compared with 1950, and according to the authors this came from those who had voted Labour (7 per cent), those who had voted Liberal (10 per cent), and those who had not voted (10 per cent): 71 per cent of those who voted Conservative in 1951 voted that way in 1950, and it is not known how 2 per cent voted in 1950.

The 1951 Labour vote was made up from 2 per cent who had voted Conservative in 1950, 4 per cent who had voted Liberal, 12 per cent who had not voted, 81 per cent who had voted Labour in 1950 and 1 per cent whose 1950 vote was not known.

The Conservatives, in fact, secured 2.5 per cent more of the votes cast in 1951

* *Straight Fight* by R. S. Milne and H. C. Mackenzie (Hansard Society, 10s. 6d.).

than in 1950. At one time it seemed as if they would do much better than this, but in the course of the election Labour waverers were strengthened. Every conversion is of importance where the margin between the rival parties is narrow, but attempts at conversion are a waste of time unless it is possible to rally one's own supporters.

Conclusions

Instead of trying to win over opponents, a properly planned election campaign will be directed at supporters, with the purpose of enthusing the apathetic and winning the waverers, to secure the largest possible turn-out on polling day.

Though this is now commonly accepted, most campaigns are run as if the electors have not made up their minds and it is necessary to help them to do so by public meetings and the distribution of printed material.

The truth is that those who attend meetings usually attend only those of their own party—in Bristol North East only one man who was interviewed claimed that the Labour candidate's speech decided him!

Surprisingly, in Bristol North East, 15 per cent of the electors claimed that they had not received any literature from the candidates and, taking this into account, it would appear that just over half the electors did read some literature, though here, too, Conservatives tended to read Conservative literature and Labour supporters Labour literature. Not many read opposition literature.

Some 80 per cent were subject to National propaganda influences during the campaign, as readers of the National Press and listeners to the B.B.C. It would be wrong to assume, however, that local activity is ineffective, as there is really no means of estimating the relative value of each separate form of propaganda which together comprise the whole election campaign.

LILIAN ANDERSON FENN

THE death of Lilian Anderson Fenn has robbed the Labour Party of one of its richest personalities. For 36 years she served as an outstanding member of its Organising Staff. During those years she poured into her work abounding

energy, inspiration and knowledge.

Lilian's powers as a propagandist were as great as her powers as an organiser. she had chosen the more colourful life she might have been an outstanding public figure, instead she chose to use her extraordinary ability in a less spectacular field of organisation.

There are thousands of women in the Labour Party to-day who will remember with gratitude the training and guidance they received from Lilian Fenn. The Labour Movement to which she dedicated her life is the poorer for her passing. The memory of her dynamic personality will remain green in the minds of all who were privileged to know her.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates at the November and December meetings of the National Executive Committee:

East Surrey	...	Miss J. G. Hall
Arundel and		
Shoreham		Mr. F. W. Banfield
North Edinburgh		Mr. G. Scott
Wokingham	...	Mr. T. G. Boston
Canterbury	...	Mr. R. G. Ward
Hornsey	...	Mr. F. E. Mostyn
Harrogate	...	Mr. T. Evers
Inverness	...	Mr. W. Paterson



WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

West Derbyshire		Mr. G. L. Williams
North Devon	...	Mr. W. H. Wilkins
Portsmouth,		
Langstone		Mr. F. E. Baker
Stretford	...	Mr. J. McCann
Salisbury	...	Mr. R. Thomas
Ross and Cromarty		Mr. R. MacFarquhar
Tynemouth	...	Mr. H. Kennan
South		
Worcestershire		Mr. L. R. Fletcher
Perth and		
East Perthshire		Mr. J. G. McKenz

Good Use Of Chaff

IT seems that a great deal of public potholer has been aroused because the B.B.C. have allowed some woman to broadcast on "Morals without Religion". At least, two or three newspapers, well-known to be pillars of religion and champions of morality, say so.

However, as this magazine has nothing to do with religion or morality we will say no more about it.

But all who have to deal with party organisation *are* concerned, directly or indirectly, with political controversy. They have to build on the results of spoken or printed propaganda that has succeeded in doing its job. That is why we return to the subject touched upon in this column two or three months ago, the nature of propaganda speeches.

EVERY year thousands of such speeches are made, mostly to indifferent or lukewarm audiences. Often they are carefully prepared. It is agreed that facts and figures, and connected argument, must be the basis of these speeches if they are to have any real value. What is at fault, very often, is that they are more polished than brightened.

Intimacy with the audience, the light touch of badinage, the flash of wit, the rapier of ridicule (properly used, the deadliest weapon in the armoury of debate), have dwindled greatly as the ranks of the "old hands" have thinned. This is a pity, because to the ordinary hearer it is these high lights of a speech that stick in the memory long after the careful argument and exposition of a case have been forgotten, and are recalled with a chuckle by all except those who take their pleasures sadly.

A couple of illustrations come to mind. In one of his great campaigns the late David Lloyd George was pestered by a persistent opponent who followed him round to meeting after meeting, always making himself a nuisance. There came the occasion when the Welsh Wonder started his address in deliberate terms,

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—I am here——" "And I am HERE", bel-
lows his pain-in-the-neck.

The Wizard paused, his eyes twinkled, the rosy face in its frame of silvery locks beamed genially. "Yes, my friend," he replied in his most sugary tones, "but are you *all there?*"

THE second is much more recent. Seven years ago one of the leading Labour Cabinet Ministers addressed a crowded theatre meeting. He devoted an important section of his speech to the gravity of the food situation facing mankind, pointing out that available records showed that world production had declined by 10% in a period during which the population had increased by twenty millions.

At this, a Tory of arrested development raucously cried, "'Ow do yew know?"—a question which in that part of the country is universally believed to be a shattering blow to any speaker.

"Well," said the Right Hon. gentleman politely, "I'll tell you."

He paused coolly, and a dead silence fell on the great audience as it waited for the revelation. Suavely he continued, "I've been around, and counted 'em."

TRIVIALIA, if you like, but it is focal points like these that grip a crowd and make a meeting memorable. So, in the interests of brighter electioneering, and of propaganda that "touches the spot", let us cultivate the art of heckling and of riposting to the heckler.

Just one word of warning; be sure to get the right words. There *was* one Labour candidate who in an emotional peroration tearfully implored his supporters to "keep the Flag of Labour running".

Should Agents Grab Local Honour?

IT'S about time that prospective full-time party organisers decided what they wanted to do before applying for advertised agencies. It is also time that agents stopped abusing their authority by using position and influence to gain themselves local government candidatures.

Maybe that opening paragraph sounds a little dogmatic and harsh. But I don't think so.

Most full-time agents will agree that if the Labour Party is to achieve electoral successes a more adequate agency service is required. They would also, no doubt, argue in favour of a scheme whereby all prospective entrants to the profession undergo a qualifying training period to make them efficient organisers and administrators.

The majority of agents pay lip service to the need for a fully integrated national agency service producing trained, qualified organisers with graduated salaries dependent on grades of responsibility, experience and qualifications. Many of us would like to see the professional status of the agent improved.

We will never achieve these ends until full time party agents concentrate on their job—which, heaven knows, is more than full time — and stop grabbing local 'honours'. It is this kind of practice which brings the agency service into disrepute and makes many of the rank and file membership wonder whether our aim is better organisation or personal aggrandisement.

It is no secret that in order to do the job properly a full-time party agent has to make many sacrifices and devote nearly the whole of his time to the job. It is small wonder then, that when the agent starts meddling in local government and gradually (and inevitably) spends more and more time on this the ordinary party members become sceptical and wonder what they are paying for.

There is also the question of divided loyalties. It is not unknown (or unusual) for the local party and the council group

to have differences of opinion. Where the loyalty of the person who is party secretary and member (probably officer of the group) lie?

As a servant, and officer, of the party he has to abide by their decisions. As a group member he is honour bound to accept full responsibility for its actions. An anomalous position that wouldn't arise if the party agent would stick to his business and used his influence to iron out difficulties between his party and group, instead of being accused (often both) of selling out one section to the other.

It has been argued that the secret agent who is in local government is in a better position to keep his finger on the pulse of local affairs. Maybe so. But I don't believe that the agent who is doing the job properly and who has gained the respect of all sections of the party keeps up to date on local affairs in the area under his control, and is better able to do so if not wasting time sitting on local government committees.

If we are so intent on improving party organisation and the status of the full time agent let us start by impressing on would-be agents that this is a vocation and that looking after the party administration and organisation is a full time job.

T. IV

Too Many Generals

In the January issue of the *Labour Organiser* under the title of *Public Man: By-Election 'Must'*, you published an interesting article by Margaret Fox. A number of useful suggestions which merit attention are made about publicity, which, incidentally, the article is mainly devoted. However, I am afraid that I am not convinced about the need for a publicity officer.

Already there are too many generals, rather colonels, and too few privates, soldiers participating in by-election campaigns. There is no real shortage of persons willing to undertake staff jobs at central committee rooms, or of volunteers

for some of the other more comfortable jobs.

Shortages of personnel make themselves apparent when canvassing and similar tasks have to be tackled.

Mrs. Fox is certainly correct when she suggests that many recent by-election campaigns have only been marked by apathy. However, the conclusions she draws from this are wrong.

The real reason for dead campaigns in many constituencies is that there is no doubt about the election result. So far as the public is concerned, a by-election is only of interest if the result is uncertain and the elector's individual vote may possibly effect the outcome.

While I am not a defeatist, I think it highly unlikely that any publicity officer will ever infuse much life into a short by-election campaign, lasting perhaps only a fortnight, if the result is a forgone conclusion and there is no really major issue at stake.

Undoubtedly publicity is important. Co-ordination of an election campaign is vital. The two tasks are so closely inter-related that they must be the direct responsibility of the election agent. If the agent is over-worked, then he might usefully delegate some of his responsibilities other than publicity.

There is a tendency amongst Agents to arrange by-election campaigns as a matter of habit. Certain rituals are carried out almost by tradition. An election address

is issued, public meetings are organised, window-bills are published, and so on.

Are these things always as necessary as we tend to suppose? From our point of view surely a by-election amounts to little more than finding our potential vote and then ensuring the maximum poll for Labour. Just how much can even good publicity contribute towards this object?

While new methods may be called for, I am not certain whether too much spectacle in publicity is required. A little of the right type can be quite useful in stimulating interest in the campaign. Too much spectacle can tend to overshadow the issues at stake.

In any case, spectacular publicity in large cities usually involves many persons who do not have a vote in the by-election. Surely our job is to approach electors, preferably in their own homes, and persuade them to vote for the Labour candidate on polling-day. If this is so, I believe it best done by personal and direct contact.

What is needed to improve the Labour vote in by-elections is intensive preparatory work in the period before the election campaign. It is unusual for a by-election to be held without reasonable advance notice. If more can be done to improve our standard of organisation in constituencies where by-elections are pending, the results might be more favourable.

ARTHUR TADMAN

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CALENDAR FOR BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTION

(ENGLAND & WALES)
except Metropolitan Boroughs

POLLING DAY : THURSDAY, 12th MAY, 19

Compiled by LEN SIMS, National Agent's Department

Notice of Election	Tuesday, 19th April
Delivery of Nomination Papers and Consent to nomination not later than NOON	Tuesday, 26th April
Notice of decisions on Nomination and publication of Statement of persons nominated by NOON	Wednesday, 27th April
Declaration, in writing, of Name and Address of Election Agent not later than NOON ..	Thursday, 28th April
Delivery of Notice of Withdrawal not later than NOON	Thursday, 28th April
Application for Extension of Polling Hours not later than NOON	Thursday, 28th April
Notice of Poll	Friday, 6th May
Notice of Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents not later than	Monday, 9th May
POLLING DAY	Thursday, 12th May
The Count	As soon as practicable after Close of Poll
Claims to be sent to Election Agent in respect of Election Expenses by	Thursday, 26th May
Payments, by Election Agent, of claims in respect of Election Expenses by	Thursday, 9th June
Return and Declaration of Election Agent as to Election Expenses by	Thursday, 16th June
Declaration by Candidate	Within seven days of actual transmission of Agent Return and Declaration

Note : Where the Declaration of Poll is made on the following day (after midnight 12th May) another day can be added for Claims, Payments and Returns.

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

(ENGLAND & WALES) 1955 DAY OF ELECTION	Thursday 31st March	Friday 1st April	Saturday 2nd April	Monday 4th April	Tuesday 5th April	Wednesday 6th April
Publication of Notice of Election	8th March	9th March	10th March	11th March	12th March	14th March
Delivery of Nomination Papers and Consent not later than NOON ..	15th March	16th March	17th March	18th March	19th March	21st March
Notices of decisions on Nomination Papers and publication of Statement as to persons nominated by NOON ..	16th March	17th March	18th March	19th March	20th March	22nd March
Declaration, in writing, of Name and Address of Election Agent not later than NOON	17th March	18th March	19th March	21st March	22nd March	23rd March
Delivery of Notices of Withdrawals by NOON	17th March	18th March	19th March	21st March	22nd March	23rd March
Application for Extension of Polling Hours not later than NOON	17th March	18th March	19th March	21st March	22nd March	23rd March
Notice of Poll	25th March	26th March	28th March	29th March	30th March	31st March
Notice of Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents not later than ..	28th March	29th March	30th March	31st March	1st April	2nd April
Polling Day	31st March	1st April	2nd April	4th April	5th April	6th April
The Count	As soon as may be practicable after close of poll					
Claims to be sent to Election Agent in respect of Election Expenses by	14th April	15th April	16th April	18th April	19th April	20th April
Payment by Election Agent of claims in respect of Election Expenses by	28th April	29th April	30th April	2nd May	3rd May	4th May
Return and Declaration of Election Agent as to Election Expenses by	5th May	6th May	7th May	9th May	10th May	11th May
Declaration by Candidate as to Election Expenses	Within seven days of actual transmission of Agent's Return and Declaration					

Urban, Rural District and

DAY OF ELECTION (Polling Day) ..	Monday, 9th May		Tuesday, 10th May
	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL
Notice of Election	13th April	15th April	14th April
Delivery of Nomination Papers and Consent not later than NOON	20th April	22nd April	21st April
Notice of decisions on Nominations and publication of Statement as to persons nominated by NOON	23rd April	23rd April	25th April
Declaration, in writing, of Name and Address of Election Agent not later than NOON ..	25th April	25th April	26th April
Delivery of Notices of Withdrawals by NOON	25th April	25th April	26th April
Application for Extension of Polling Hours not later than NOON	25th April	25th April	26th April
Notice of Poll	3rd May	3rd May	4th May
Notice of Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents not later than	5th May	5th May	6th May
Day of Election	9th May	9th May	10th May
The Count			
Claims to be sent to Election Agent in respect of Election Expenses by	23rd May	23rd May	24th May
Payment, by Election Agent, of claims in respect of Election Expenses by	Parish *30th May	6th June	Parish 31st May
	Rural District 6th June		Rural District 7th June
Return and Declaration of Election Agent as to Election Expenses by	Parish 6th June	13th June	Parish 7th June
	Rural District 13th June		Rural District 14th June
Declaration of Candidate as to Election Expenses	The Declaration can be sent with Parish Council Elections which are held at the same time. *Whit Monday.		

Notes : Where the declaration of poll payments, and Returns.
Election Agents are not required to

FOR ish Council Elections, 1955

Wednesday, 11th May		Thursday, 12th May		Friday, 13th May		Saturday, 14th May	
RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN
April	18th April	16th April	19th April	18th April	20th April	19th April	21st April
April	25th April	23rd April	26th April	25th April	27th April	26th April	28th April
April	26th April	27th April	27th April	28th April	28th April	29th April	29th April
April	27th April	28th April	28th April	29th April	29th April	30th April	30th April
April	27th April	28th April	28th April	29th April	29th April	30th April	30th April
April	27th April	28th April	28th April	29th April	29th April	30th April	30th April
May	5th May	6th May	6th May	7th May	7th May	9th May	9th May
May	7th May	9th May	9th May	10th May	10th May	11th May	11th May
May	11th May	12th May	12th May	13th May	13th May	14th May	14th May
may be practicable after Close of the Poll							
May	25th May	26th May	26th May	27th May	27th May	28th May	28th May
ish June	8th June	Parish 2nd June	9th June	Parish 3rd June	10th June	Parish 4th June	11th June
ral trict June		Rural District 9th June		Rural District 10th June		Rural District 11th June	
ish June	15th June	Parish 9th June	16th June	Parish 10th June	17th June	Parish 11th June	18th June
ral trict June		Rural District 16th June		Rural District 17th June		Rural District 18th June	
of the Election Agent transmitting the Return of Election Expenses (excepting Agent is not required), but it is wisest to ensure the Declaration is submitted							

following day (after midnight) then another day can be added for Claims,

Council Elections.

CALENDAR FOR SCOTTISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Polling Days :

Burgh and City Councils - - Tuesday, May 3rd, 1955

County and District Councils - Tuesday, May 10th, 1955

	Burgh and City	County and District
NOTICE OF ELECTION by the fourth Tuesday preceding the day of election	5th April	12th April
DELIVERY OF NOMINATION PAPERS not later than 4.0 p.m. on the third Tuesday preceding day of election	12th April	19th April
APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION AGENT; APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF POLLING HOURS; NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATE. Delivery of such notices to be not later than 4.0 p.m. on the second Tuesday preceding day of election	19th April	26th April
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AND COUNTING AGENTS to be delivered not later than the fourth day before the day of election ..	28th April	5th May
NOTICE OF POLL; NOTICE OF UNTESTED ELECTION not later than the Friday preceding the day of election	29th April	6th May
POLLING DAY	3rd May	10th May
CLAIMS to be sent to Election Agent in respect of election expenses by	17th May	24th May
PAYMENTS by Election Agent in respect of election expenses by	31st May	7th June
RETURN AND DECLARATION BY ELECTION AGENT as to election expenses by	7th June	14th June
DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE within seven days of the actual transmission of Election Agent's Return and Declaration		

Note : Where the declaration of poll is made on the following day, another day may be added for Claims, Payments, and Returns.

USING OUR OWN LANGUAGE

by DON ALGER

BEING in a controversial mood, I will risk the opinion that Robert Graves (once, I believe, a parish councillor) is the best of living English poets. In his poem, 'The Philatelist Royal', he says,

The Philatelist Royal
Was always too loyal
To say what he honestly
Thought of Philately.

Similarly (and quite seriously) many members of our Party are too loyal to say what they honestly think of some of the letters and circulars they receive. These papers are not inviting; often it is impossible to call them interesting. Because they are confused, inexact or wordy, one reads them not with pleasure but simply as a duty.

And since there is such a cry everywhere about the dearth of effective propaganda, one wonders (in one's simple way) why every literate member of the Party does not see that in his own language he has an instrument of propaganda which, if tidily, exactly and briefly used, is of incomparable power.

Let us suppose that everything we write for the Party is orderly, accurate and brief. Does it not follow that our readers will be (a) pleased by the orderliness, (b) convinced by the accuracy, and (c) soothed by the brevity?

The lightest word creates an impression. It is a solemn thought that every letter issued in the name of our Party makes the Party look *more* or *less* attractive.

Apart from the setting of the words on paper—the arrangement of the words in the space available, which is a mechanical process that can with very little trouble give an attractive result—there is the quality of the words themselves to be considered.

First Rule

Orderliness is the first rule. Let there be one subject, and one subject only, to each letter, or (if the letter must deal with several subjects) one subject to each page.

And let each paragraph deal with one aspect of a subject and one aspect only.

If a letter argues a case, let the first paragraph summarise the case to be argued, the last paragraph summarise the conclusions, and the intervening paragraphs detail the evidence for the conclusions.

There is no pleasure in reading a confused, digressive letter. But the pleasure of reading an orderly letter is immediate and significant.

It is especially significant if the writer is a Socialist, for the reader associates (though perhaps unconsciously) the orderly politics of the writer with the orderly character of his writing. An impression of competence and consistency is created. Thus merely by the choice of a few words in a trivial letter the credit of the Party is raised.

Second Rule

Accuracy is the second rule. It is all to the good if the writer of a letter can spell correctly, but this again is largely a mechanical process, skill in which can be acquired with the help of a dictionary. There are geniuses who cannot spell.

The accuracy which is really important is accuracy of statement; correct dates, times and proper names are essential if the reader is easily and truly to understand what is written. Facts and arguments must be so phrased that they convey to the reader exactly what they are meant to convey. The reader must not be left in a torment of doubt as to whether or not he understands the intention of the writer.

A vague general statement can give a completely false impression. To put it figuratively, there is a world of difference between a white Christmas (a general term descriptive of a whole season) and a sprinkling of snow on Boxing Day (a precise statement about a specific portion of a season). Accuracy is another source of pleasure. It saves the mind the agitation of uncertainty.

And the final rule is brevity, which is

perhaps the hardest of the rules to obey. Speakers are often condemned for what is called "a fatal fluency". It is easy to write a long letter, reflecting the pirouetting of the mind around a subject.

To write briefly demands mental discipline. It means getting the mind to separate essential from inessential considerations. It means confining one's writing exclusively to the essentials. A turgid letter tires the reader and wastes his time. He yawns and feels instinctively hostile to the writer and his message. Try brevity and avoid loading our Party with a reputation for tediousness.

One can write:

Dear Comrade,

You are invited to a special meeting of our General Committee in the usual place next Friday when there will be a report from Comrade Sanderson on the marketing of butter, which was opposed at the recent conference he attended on our behalf

and on which our Executive Committee feels very strongly and will propose a motion of protest.

Yours fraternally,

But it might be better to write:
Dear Comrade,

You are invited to attend a special meeting of the General Committee which will be held at 8 p.m. on Friday, February 4th, in the Unicorn Hall, Royal Street, Barnsdown. The meeting will consider: (1) Comrade Sanderson's report of the Regional Conference held at Sunwich on Saturday, January 29th, on a scheme for the marketing of butter, and (2) a resolution of protest from our Executive Committee against the scheme.

Yours fraternally,

Why not invest in the best and cheapest library ever? It consists of two books:

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1955 Election Year ??

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WHAT! ANOTHER CAMPAIGN?

Arthur: I've lived in my constituency for ten years and I've seen a lot of campaigns which haven't impressed me. I don't know that any of them has raised our membership or changed the minds of our waverers. And I'm not enthused because the powers that be have called the latest one the 'Forward to Victory' campaign.

Hubert: You haven't said much about the past campaigns. What did you do?

Arthur: We did all the things we were asked to do. We tried to get new members; to enrol postal voters; to distribute leaflets; to hold a few public meetings. We hadn't many people to help, and they were overworked and couldn't do much more. I remember a public meeting we had—fifteen people present and a Member of Parliament all the way from London to speak. Terrible, I thought.

Hubert: But I think you've mistaken the purpose of these campaigns, and especially of the 'Forward to Victory' do. It's not the intention to pile a set of new tasks on top of those already being done by the constituency parties. The National Executive doesn't purposely devise straws to break the camel's back. The intention is to intensify, to 'pep up', dramatise and systematise the *normal* tasks of the constituency parties.

It's chiefly an extra effort on familiar ground that's wanted. It means doing what's usually done with the efficiency that really brings results. Certainly we want more people doing what the few are always doing. But we also want the few out of their devotion to the cause to do a little more or (what is just as good) to do their usual work in a planned, instead of a casual, way.

Arthur: It sounds well enough. But you don't seem to understand that our party's never keen on these campaigns. Of course the circulars are always read and we always do *something*. But where does it get us?

Hubert: I'd guess your party hasn't asked itself about the purpose of the campaigns. It has treated each one as simply

another job which must be done, because a circular from Headquarters has prescribed it. All our organisational and publicity campaigns have two objects—to give us more exact knowledge of the electorate and to take us a stage nearer to a Socialist world. We're still idealists, aren't we?

Arthur: Surely.. And you're really talking when you mention a Socialist world. But I don't think you'd convince my party or any average party.

Hubert: Why not? The 'Forward to Victory' campaign is based on *Challenge to Britain*, which was approved by Annual Conference as a declaration of Party policy. What other basis can we have? Or what better?

Challenge to Britain isn't an encyclopedia of Socialism. It isn't meant to be. It's an outline of the measures the next Socialist government must take. There's no serious dispute about them. And the 'Forward to Victory' campaign is to bring these measures convincingly before the public. That's the Socialist education brought up to date.

Arthur: Perhaps my party hasn't considered the Socialist implications of *Challenge to Britain*, as you expound them. But why a 'Forward to Victory' campaign now?

Hubert: Because at the most there are 18 months before the next General Election, and we really must be ready. It's more than likely that the General Election will come this year. Few governments run to the end of their time.

'Forward to Victory' isn't a routine affair. It's a unique campaign, stirring our people everywhere to make a sustained effort to get the policy of *Challenge to Britain* across; to make new members; and, above all, to increase the number of active workers and to canvass the electors and record their sympathies.

All this is vital, coming as it does just after the revision of constituency boundaries and just before the momentous local government elections. There couldn't

be a more opportune time.

Arthur: You make me wonder why it hasn't been done before.

Hubert: It has and, as you yourself have said, always with *some* success. Now we want the success to be *exceptional*. Perhaps we've forgotten that the power to achieve a Socialist world depends on our ability to win the confidence of the electors. In many parts of the country we don't know for certain where we stand with them.

To know is the key to success at the General Election. The knowledge will enable us to discover our virtues and vices in the eyes of people whose support we need. And locally and nationally we may have a chance to correct our faults and to advertise—mass-advertise, I should say—our merits before Sir Winston or Sir Anthony decrees the Election Campaign for his big but no longer impressive battalions.

Canvassing? Watch Your Dress!

Says Alfred Richman

THERE'S no doubt now that the most important work in elections is canvassing. In the recent by-elections it was the men and women who were prepared to go out to the doorsteps who were urgently needed rather than the envelope addressers and literature folders.

We carefully instruct our canvassers on the technique of doorstep approach. "Apologise for disturbing them . . ." "Don't waste time drinking cups of tea . . ." "Don't get into long arguments . . ." and "Leave a pamphlet or two . . ." *London News* readers probably know them all.

'I was shocked!'

I've been to some of the recent by-elections and what shocks me is that nobody tells our canvassers how to *dress* for the doorstep.

Canvassers in grubby sweaters and corduroys, some in chokers, others in dirty creased sports jackets and bright shirts. Girls and women in shapeless coats, twisted stockings, mud-caked shoes.

In short, men and women going out to ask for votes looking for all the world as if they were about to drive lorry loads of fish from Hull to London.

I think clothes on canvassers matter. After all, when you approach an elector you are not just representing the candidate or a policy. You stand before the

ALFRED RICHMAN of the "*Daily Herald*" is a well-known figure at Parliamentary by-election campaigns.

Writing in a recent issue of the "*London News*" he appealed for canvassers to dress for the job—in reasonable looking attire.

elector at his own home as the personal link between him and the great Labour Party.

Obviously the Party is judged by the sort of people who it sends out as its ambassadors. What sort of ambassador is the scruffy, untidy type of canvasser—man or woman—likely to be?

Flannels if . . .

I'm not asking you to wear 50-guinea suits, top hats, or mink coats. Don't write and make sarcastic cracks like that.

Sports jackets *will* do. But couldn't they be clean and unwrinkled? Flannel bags are fine. But must they be the ones you painted the house in last Sunday and are going to use for that white-washing job when the weather gets better?

In short, must we go out on by-elections specially dressed down for the job?

HIGH-LIGHTS FROM REPORTS

By **PAT CAVANAUGH**

GOING through the half-yearly reports of full-time agents it soon becomes apparent that much of their time during the past six months has been spent in preparations for a General Election. It should be so at this stage when the possibility is that the Election will come at any time, with little or no warning. Many agents report decreases in the number of individual members.

Mabel Raisin of **Lewisham South** points to the difficulty of maintaining a large membership in an area where there are a considerable number of changes among the electorate. After making 1,155 new members during 1954 membership shows an increase of only five over the previous year. However, **Lewisham South**, with 7,755, has the largest individual membership of any party in the country.

At **Tiverton**, Ken Barnett reports fewer members, but an increase of approximately £100 in contributions. He also refers to those helpful parties who pass on to him information relating to members moving into his constituency. A lot of wasted time and energy could be eliminated if all parties co-operated in this way. Head Office is always pleased to act as a 'clearing house' in those cases where the new address of a member is known but not the constituency party which should be contacted.

Public meetings have not been well supported, says F. Rillstone of **West Dorset**, but the coverage they receive from the local Press make them worthwhile. The local weekly paper goes into nearly every house and a front-page report of the prospective candidate's speech is valuable publicity.

Harold Nash, **Birmingham** Borough Party Secretary, tells of a new achievement in the long history of the borough party. For the first time the affiliation fees received from Trade Union organisations have exceeded £1,000.

Rochdale's General Election plans are well advanced, reports J. Hughes. Pre-

parations have been made for public and factory gate meetings even down to the point of stamped addressed envelopes being ready for forwarding applications for halls and schoolrooms.

The work of the N.A.L.S.O. student canvassing team comes in for a word of praise from Will Barratt of **Accrington**. The team provided them with details of 600 new members, and over 500 of them subsequently joined up and maintained their membership. The influx created the problem of collecting subscriptions, but this was overcome and is now on a better footing than it has been for years.

H. Luxton of **Hitchin** tells of a small village of 399 electors which has a party membership of 73. This village party has obtained details of 19 postal voters and will be supplying five cars on polling day. The efforts of 20 years campaigning have been crowned at Hitchin now that the district has been divided into wards following a public inquiry.

A Fête attended by no less than 10,000 people is the highlight of the report received from Bill Gray of **Faversham**. (See *Labour Organiser*, November, 1954). He also reports the death of an old stalwart who was Secretary of the Sheerness Local Labour Party for more than 30 years. Towards the end of his secretaryship he had to be brought to the meetings in a bath chair. Will we ever be able to match the devotion and enthusiasm for a cause that some of the 'old un's' have shown us?

Comment

Some of the duplicated material forwarded with reports is extremely well done and is quite a pleasure to read. There are, however, instances where the standard is very low. It really is worthwhile spending a little bit of time over this job. Few people have the ability to produce a well set out circular letter without first of all making a draft. Care in 'rolling off' is also essential, and if you must go over on to the back of a sheet it always pays to interleave.

ARTHUR GARDINER RETIRES

FOR many, many years in Labour circles, Arthur Gardiner and Huddersfield have been synonymous. It was in 1906 Arthur decided that Socialism presented to him a cause worth working for and the only hope of the peoples of the World.

At the General Election 49 years ago, Arthur began a life-time's work for his faith and in the great chronicle of events, involving personalities, triumphs and disasters, he has played his own inimitable part.

The Huddersfield Socialist Party was formed in 1909 and continued its individuality until 1914 when it merged with the British Socialist Party. Arthur was propaganda secretary and ultimately secretary. The selection of speakers for the weekly meetings held by the Socialist Party was his responsibility. This entailed sending to each selected propagandist a questionnaire to be completed before he was permitted to speak on behalf of the party.

The questions were designed to search into the faith and ability of the speakers and no doubt created the impression that the Huddersfield Socialist Party was conferring a distinction upon them and left them with no illusions about who was honouring whom.

For the Huddersfield Socialist Party, no mass membership campaigns: indeed the reverse, as applicants for membership were placed on a waiting list and admitted only when vacancies occurred through death, retirement or expulsion. Those were the days of Socialism for the masses, directed and controlled by the faithful few who had entered into the privileged circle by sustaining a scrutiny comparable only to the most select of 'Orders'.

From 1914 Arthur was propaganda secretary of the Huddersfield Branch of the British Socialist Party: an office he held until 1920 when the B.S.P. linked up with other groups to form the Communist Party of Great Britain. This proved too

much, even for Arthur, who resigned and transferred his activities to the Labour Party.

Like many more Socialists of that day, Arthur bitterly opposed Britain's declaration of war in 1914 and played his part as a conscientious objector in opposing the war effort. On being called up, he registered as an objector on the basis of his Socialist faith. He, like many others, suffered extreme hardships and persecution, ultimately being sentenced to two years hard labour at a trial at Rougley in 1917.

He served his sentence in several of H.M. Prisons, but the discipline did not deter him in his pursuit of social justice. Acting in concert with comrades who were sharing his hardships for Socialism, no opportunity was lost to spread the gospel among the staffs and inmates of the several places of restricted abode.

For some reason, unknown to Arthur, he was released early in 1918 and once again began his public activities for Socialism. No platform was too large or small for his mighty voice and small figure, and each week-end saw him addressing meetings in his beloved Yorkshire, or in Lancashire.

In the Trade Union world too he was not unknown and on the amalgamation of the General Union of Textile Workers and the National Union of Dyers and Finishers, he was appointed first secretary of the Huddersfield Oakes Branch, having previously served on the Branch Committee of the Dyers and Finishers.

In 1926, he was appointed full-time agent to the Huddersfield Labour Party, an office he will vacate on the 28th February, 1955—almost 29 years continuous, full-time service.

In 1927, when victimisation limited the number of candidates available for the municipal elections, he was elected a councillor for his native town. He has served continuously on the council, became an alderman in 1940, and was Mayor in 1941-42. His Labour Group colleagues chose him as their Leader 21

years ago and he still retains their confidence.

In the National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents he has also played his part. He joined in 1926 when O. G. Willey, M.P. for Cleveland from 1945 until his death, was district secretary and agent at York. He was elected Chairman of the District in 1938 and has been the unanimous choice of his colleagues since.

Contemporaries in the Yorkshire district of the union included Willie Withey, Wilfrid Whiteley, Sam Eastwood, H. F. Heavside, George Brett, Margaret Gibb, Will Lewcock, W. J. Armstrong, Reg. Wallis, Sara Barker, Len Williams and Maurice Webb, all of whom carved their own niche in the history of the Labour Party and those of them still with us can testify to the grandness of the character, humour and loyalty of a grand, little, big man, Arthur Gardiner.

In his honour, the Yorkshire Agents are holding a Dinner and making a presentation.

North Eastern

J. T. ANSON

Own Home

THERE were two meetings—the first was held in the little room over the old Co-op. shop. The other, *unofficial*, was held later the same evening in the snugger of the “Spotted Dog” across the street. The General Strike of 1926 had just ended.

Nineteen people were present at the first meeting. Ten were from the I.L.P., and nine came from the local Trades Council and Labour Party.

They said, “We must have a meeting place of our own for the workers of Dorking.” After a short debate it was decided to form Dorking Workers’ Hall Ltd., under the Friendly Societies Act.

That night young Jack Stemp, then champion fly-poster lad of the Labour Movement in Surrey, forgot all he had learned at the Band of Hope. He joined the other fellows in the “Spotted Dog” first to drink a toast to “Socialism”, and then a toast to “Workers’ Hall Ltd.”. From toast giving to sterner business. Before the stentorian cry of “Time gentlemen, please” was called, many plans had been made for raising money for the hall.

Soon followed the 1930’s, and hard times for the workers and Labour Movement in the political backwaters of Surrey. By 1939 little more than £200 had been raised by Workers’ Hall Ltd. With the coming of

World War II the joint enterprise between the I.L.P. and the local Labour Party was ended. The fund was equally divided between the two organisations.

All through the years of war the determination to find a centre for working-class activities remained firm in the minds of the Trade Union and Labour folk in Dorking. To quote Stan Natrass, Labour agent for the constituency:—

“Early in 1941, a motion was proposed at the Dorking Trades Council, now separate from the Labour Party—that a building fund be started among Trade Unionists in the town; the ultimate aim to raise enough to start a Trades and Labour Club Ltd. This was to be on a share basis, the shares costing half-a-crown each. The scheme was duly launched, and although the Labour Party was not officially committed, naturally many Labour Party members subscribed. This fund raised £40, and then enthusiasm again waned.”

With the first years of peace came a redistribution of parliamentary boundaries. The new Dorking constituency was regarded as one of the most difficult for Labour in southern England.

On a wet autumn afternoon in 1952 I spied veteran 51-year-old James Todd pedalling his “sit up and beg” bike along Dorking’s West Street. “Can’t stop and talk now,” said Comrade Todd. “I’m collecting for Dorking and District Labour Hall.”

This is what had happened. In September Stan Natrass had convened a meeting of “those interested in starting Dorking and District Labour Halls Ltd.”. Twenty-nine Labour Party members turned up at the meeting. It was explained that the society would be registered; it would be self-governing; members must hold a £1 share, be a member of the Labour Party or an affiliated organisation; and that twelve months’ continuous membership of the Labour Party must be held to qualify for a seat on the management committee.

Jack Stemp, now a Labour councillor, was elected chairman, and Lord Pethick-Lawrence was elected president. Within a few minutes £24 was subscribed. The committee set itself a target—“£1,000 and premises to be occupied by 1954”.

Weeks and months passed. Then one day this message appeared on my office telephone pad—“*come and have a drink at the ‘Spotted Dog’.*” It was one of those rare days of an English winter. In the woodlands around Boxhill the hazel catkins sparkled in the pale sunshine. In the warmth of the snugger of the “Spotted

Dog" I found Jack Stemp, Stan Nattrass and Tony Angell. We sampled the landlord's hospitality.

"Now come with us," said Stan, and over we went to South Street. "See that name?" said Jack Stemp. And by the light of the street lamp I read this inscription—"Pethick-Lawrence House".

"Well, we've done it. It took us thirty years," said Jack. And with twinkling eyes they conducted me over this lovely house. It is a house of spacious fire-places, of lofty ceilings and warm colourings. It was built by craftsmen long since dead, but it is indeed a house of *character*. Set in the centre of Dorking, it has four floors, several committee rooms and a hall which will seat over seventy people.

Down in the basement, Dorothy Pelham and Eileen Day were busily preparing sandwiches. Upstairs the rooms were garlanded with laurels. Brightly burning oak logs were in the fire-places.

Soon the company began to arrive. This was not the official opening—that is to come in the spring. This was a little house-warming with those who had shared in the struggle to find a "Workers' Hall". Amongst them were Pethick-Lawrence, James Todd, Bill Kelsey, Charlie Robinson, and Jim Pickering. By September, 1954, £1,050 had been subscribed in share capital.

Now it had happened — "*We have a meeting place of our own!*"

F. SHEPHERD.

Year's Plan

AT the beginning of last year, I wrote in the *Labour Organiser* an article concerning an experiment we were conducting to persuade a number of Constituency Labour Parties to put on paper at the commencement of the year, a plan of political, educational and organisational activity for a full year.

We have been able to test the result of this experiment and have found that where it has been operated with enthusiastic efficiency, it has been a huge success, so much so, that we have already received invitations to assist in the preparation of a similar plan for 1955.

I, therefore, want to urge upon Constituency Labour Parties the many advantages of calling together their officers and prospective Parliamentary candidates, and working out a plan for the current year.

It is quite a common experience now to walk into a constituency party office, and

see a wall chart exhibiting the activities the party will engage in during the year. The wall charts not only contain the dates of public meetings, lectures and special social events, but also the routine party meetings.

In the plan, these routine party engagements are important, because it enables the party to avoid clashing of dates. Another great advantage of a year's plan is that it can be estimated in advance what the financial requirements will be to put the plan into operation, thus enabling the party either to raise additional money to do the work, or to cut the work so as to fit in with the money available.

The year 1955 will be a year of intense activity and considerable interest, for it will involve not only the county, borough, district and parish elections, but in all probability a General Election as well. The year will also include the National *Forward to Victory* Campaign. This campaign alone can occupy every constituency party for many months ahead. To add to these activities, the re-organisation necessitated by the alteration of Parliamentary boundaries will call for a good deal of co-ordination and re-organisation.

With so much on our plates, it would be a simple matter for confusion to creep in. Why not, therefore, meet immediately and put your plan on paper, so that 1955 will see your party working in a business-like way to create a superb organisation, to make it possible for the largest possible number of electors to be reached with Labour's policy, both local and national?

South Western

E. V. REES

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